

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the portions of the specification identified below to read as indicated herein.

**Paragraph beginning at page 6, line 1:**

Processor 40 is operable under the control of operating system 48 to run authentication program 50 to respond to a request from user device 32 to supply authentication data pertinent for a selected or target business. User device 32 is operated by a representative of a user company, hereafter referred to as “user”.

**Paragraph beginning at page 6, line 7:**

By way of example, the present invention will be described for the case, in which the business partner is XYZ Company, hereafter referred to as XYZ. The business relation between XYZ and user is that XYZ is a business partner of user, such as a supplier, customer, joint venture partner, licensee, licensor, or other business partner. In the example, the user operates user device 32 to request that XYZ be authenticated as a viable business partner. The request is made by user device 32 either directly to computer system 22 via network 24 or indirectly via e-business device-30 28. For example, e-business device-30 28 may supply various business services to the user, one of which may be an authentication service linked to computer system 22. In the example to be described, user device 32 will be assumed to directly communicate with computer system 22 via network 24.

**Paragraph beginning at page 7, line 16:**

Step 62 matches the identifying data to a data record of a business in database 26. That is, step 62 searches database 26 for a data record of a business that contains attributes that match those of the identifying data of XYZ. If step 64 determines that a match is found by step 62, step 66 retrieves certain data elements or attributes of the matched business data records. These data attributes are those

that will be needed by an authentication process. Step 68 then processes the retrieved data elements in accord with the authentication policy that includes a plurality of authentication rules to determine authenticity of the target business.